of the precipitation has been beyond our control. Would the Government consider making greater use of the artificial precipitation measures which have been proved? As you may be aware, the scientists in Gujarat have succeeded in this. I am told that in Maharashtra we have very qualified people. Would the Government consider about it so that we can solve the drinking water shortage problem in several parts of western India?

Sir, in the context of fodder, would a sub-technology mission on fodder only be considered as a part of the Operation Flood Scheme? If that is considered, after some time from now, next year or a year after that we can benefit from it. Would the Government kindly consider this one?

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: The suggestion is commendable.

Construction of New Railway Lines/ Conversion of Railway Lines in Bihar

*4. SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to construct new Railway lines/conversion of metre gauge into broad-gauge in Bihar in the near future;

(b) if so, details thereof;

(c) whether Government have received any request for constructing new railway lines or conversion of existing narrow gauge lines into broad gauge, from the State Govt. of Bihar;

(d) if so, the details thereof; *vis-a-vis* acceptance by Government and

(e) by when Government propose to implement the same?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): (a) and (b) A proposal for conversion of Muzaffarpur - Narkatiaganj - Bagaha-Gorakhpur and Sagauli- Raxaul MG line into BG has been sent to the Planning Commission for their approval.

(c) to (e) A large number of demands were discussed between the State Government and the Railway Ministry from time to time. In an inter-Ministerial Meeting in July, 89, the State Government put forward 22 projects:—

(i) Dehri-on-Sone-Akhapur-Pipradih-with extention to Jadunathpur and Bhavnathpur (98.5 KM.)

(ii) Muzaffarpur - Narkatiaganj *via* Bettian gauge conversion (155 km).

Regarding item (i), the Bihar Government commmissioned RITES for preparing a report on this line. The report has since been submitted to the Bihar Government for consideration.

Regarding item (ii), the position has been furnished in para (a) above.

श्री सुरेन्द्रजीत सिंह अहलुवालिया : सभापति महोदय, मैं आपके माध्यम से मंत्री महोदय से पूछना चाहूंगा, यह जो मुजफ्फरपुर - नरकटियागंज - बगहा गोरखपुर और सगौली रक्सौल मीटर लाइन को बड़ी लाइन के लिए प्रस्ताव योजना-आयोग को दिया गया है, यह कब दिया गया है और उसके ऊपर अभी तक बिहार सरकार के साथ क्या कोई मीटिंग की गई है या नहीं की गई है ? अगर मीटिंग की गई है तो उसमें बिहार सरकार का रवैया क्या है ? प्रश्न "क" और "ख" प्रश्न मेरा यह है, इन्होंने कहा है कि बिहार सरकार ने राइट्स को इस लाइन के बारे में रिपोर्ट तैयार करने का कार्य सौंपा था—बेतिया आमान परिवर्तन के रास्ते मुजफ्फरपुर नरकटियागंज (155 किलोमीटर) और यह रिपोर्ट बिहार सरकार को प्रस्तुत कर दी गई है, तो यह कार्य राइट्स को कब सौंपा गया था और उसके बाद केन्द्रीय रेल मंत्रालय ने बिहार सरकार के साथ क्या कोई मीटिंग की है ? अगर मीटिंग की है तो उसके क्या हालात हैं, बताने की कृपा करेंगे ।

SHRI MALLIKARJUN: So far as the conversion of the railway line Muzaffarpur-Narkatiaganj - Gorakhpur is concerned, the proposal was sent to the Planning Commission in the month of February, 1991. Some queries were asked by the Planning Commission and those replies have recently been sent to the Planning Commission.

So far as proposals from the Bihar Government are concerned, there was an inter-ministerial meeting in 1989. The Government of Bihar has proposed two lines. The first one is : Dehri-on-Sone-Akhapur-Pipradib with extention to Jadunathpur and Bhavnathpur. For this new line the Government of Bihar has asked the RITES to survey it and submit a report. The RITES have surveyed it and submitted a report recently to the Government of Bihar. Now, the Railways are waiting for the reaction from the Government of Bihar.

SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA: When it was submitted?

SHRI MALLIKARJUN: The Government of Bihar has proposed this new line in 1989; and they have asked the RITES to survey it and submit a report. They have not asked the Railways to survey and submit a report. The RITES have submitted a report to the Government of Bihar and we are waiting for the reaction from them. As soon as their reaction is received, whatever the Railways have to do, we will do.

श्री सुरेन्द्रजीत सिंह अहलुवालिया : सभापति महोदय, मेरे सवाल का तो जवाब ही नहीं आया । अब इन्होंने कहा कि वह "राइट्स" को कहा, रेलवे को नहीं कहा । मंत्री महोदय को पता नहीं कि "राइट्स" रेलवे के अन्दर ही आता है, बाहर से नहीं आया हुआ ।

SHRI MALLIKARJUN: It is wrong on the part of the hon. Member to accuse me. RITES is an autonomous organisation; and any State Government can pay and engage their services. That is how the Government of Bihar has requested RITES to survey the new line and submit a report. Accordingly they have prepared a report and submitted it to them. Now the report is with the Government of Bihar.

श्री सुरेन्द्रजीत सिंह अहलुवालिया : अध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं मंत्री महोदय से जानना चाहूंगा कि किस तरह से बिहार से रेल मंत्रालय का सौतेलापन चलता है, क्योंकि साउथ बिहार में हम हालात देखते हैं जो ट्राइब्ल्स का इलाका है और इस पर मैं पहले भी सवाल उठा चुका हूं कि उस इलाके में दूर दूर तक लोगों को सर पर बोझा उठाए गाड़ी का और ठेले का इंतजार करना पड़ता है, सड़क का कोई रास्ता नहीं है और रेलवे लाइन के लिए हमने बहुत मांग की है लेकिन अभी तक उस पर कोई कारवाई नहीं हुई ।

मैं यह जानना चाहता हूं कि अभी तक रेलवे मंत्री जिन जिन राज्यों से हुए हैं वहां की प्रगति और बिहार की प्रगति के बारे में इन्होंने कोई विश्लेषण किया हो तो बतलाने की कृपा करें ।

SHRI MALLIKARJUN: Sir, it is true that demands for construction of new lines are there from every State; it is not only from Bihar. So far as the State of Bihar is concerned, 18 surveys have been conducted. One of the new lines is Ranchi-Hazaribagh-Koderma. This proposal has been sent to the Planning Commission; and they have not agreed for it because of the constraint of funds. This is the difficult position which Bihar is facing.

SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA: This line is in the tribal area.

SHRI MALLIKARJUN: The policy of our is to see that in any tribal belt all facilities are provided. It is laid down in our policy. It is not a question of negligence towards tribals.

SHRI YASHWANT SINHA: Did you approach Planning Commission again?

SHRI MALLIKARJUN: No, we have not taken it up again with them.

SHRI YASHWANT SINHA: If they have rejected, why not take it up again with them? (*Interruptions*) If they have rejected why you could not take it up again?

SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA: It is not because of the economic feasibility, they have rejected. They have rejected it on some other ground.

SHRI MALLIKARJUN: The Planning Commission has rejected it because of paucity of funds.

SHRI YASHWANT SINHA: This calls for clarification.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Mohd. Salim.

श्री मोहम्मद सलीम : माननीय सभापति जी... (व्यवधान)...

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF): May I have the permission of the Chair?

श्री सभापति : क्या हुआ ?

SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF: While my colleague was answering the hon. Member's question, there was some...

श्री सभापति : जल्दी बोल दीजिए।

SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF: What I would like to submit is that this demand is not there from Bihar only. This demand is there from every State. There has been always a demand about the development of infrastructure in every State. The financial constraints are known to every Member of the House; they have been in and out of the Government. Wherever it is possible, wherever the returns are assured, it is our policy to take it up.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Broad Gauge Lines in Assam

*5. SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the area which has been covered by broad gauge line out of a total 78,240 sq. K.M. area in Assam;

(b) what are the reasons for not covering large tea growing areas of Upper Assam through broad gauge lines; and

(c) the reasons for which the Barak Valley of Assam, has not been connected by broad gauge lines?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF):

Statement

(a) The length of Broad Gauge Railway lines in Assam is 266.41 kms. The area served is between Srirampur on the Bengal-Assam border and Guwahati.

(b) and (c) The State of Assam is well served by a long metre gauge network running through the length of the State and the existing rail heads are not far from the tea estates and Barak Valley. Conversion of the system to B.G. would require huge investments and the Railways are facing a resource crunch. Moreover,